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Letter dated 23 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 18 June 1998 (A/52/961) addressed to you by the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations. The letter adds nothing new to the previous one dated 28 January 1998 (A/52/779-S/1998/81), which was answered by my letter dated 4 February 1998 (A/52/783-S/1998/101).

It is obvious that the Turkish aim is to stir up and maintain a climate of artificial tension for their own reasons.

The enhancement of the defensive capabilities of the National Guard is an expression of the exercise of the right to self-defence recognized in the Charter of the United Nations and in general international law to any Member State. This is especially true in the case of Cyprus, where the long-standing illegal occupation of the northern part of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkish forces, numbering around 36,000, makes this even more relevant.

The Permanent Representative of Turkey claims in his letter that military measures by Cyprus - which are for strictly defence purposes - "challenge the stability of and increase tension on the island and in the region". I would like to point out that the tension on the island is only caused by the strong and threatening presence of the Turkish occupation troops who are in an attack formation and who have the capability to get early reinforcements from Turkey. This is the reason why the Government of the Republic is compelled to strengthen its National Guard as a deterrent and to ensure better defence capabilities in case Turkey makes an attempt to advance or strike the free areas of the Republic.

Our experience with the Turkish bombardments against innocent civilians in 1964 and 1974 fully justifies our concern for the security of our people. It is clear and undeniable that the Turkish threats and actions both in 1964 and 1974

were in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Article 2, paragraphs 3 and 4, which provide that disputes are to be settled by peaceful means and prohibit the use of force or the threat of force in international relations.

Turkey is always ready to threaten to take military measures against Cyprus. We have not however seen even the slightest effort on its part towards reducing tension or supporting return to the negotiating table for finding a principled and sustainable solution of the Cyprus problem on the basis of the United Nations resolutions. On the contrary, Turkey encourages and directs the unacceptable demands and preconditions of the Turkish Cypriot leadership, which the international community has found unrealistic and in contravention of international legality.

The Government of Cyprus, for its part, has given ample proof of its desire to find a peaceful solution to the Cyprus problem providing security and prosperity to both communities on the island. In this context I would like to recall the recent letter by Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus, to the Secretary-General, dated 18 June (A/52/960-S/1998/542, annex), in which he proposes an initiative for achieving progress in reducing military tensions. The proposal of President Clerides aims at a comprehensive discussion for a package agreement on all fundamental aspects of the security situation in Cyprus, of both a short-term and a long-term nature. President Clerides's detailed proposal for the total demilitarization of Cyprus, submitted to the Secretary-General in 1993, as well as his non-paper on reducing tensions in the military field submitted last summer in Glion, Switzerland, are still on the table. Its acceptance would pave the way towards a comprehensive and lasting solution of the Cyprus problem. More specifically by accepting this proposal Turkey will dispel the fears of the Greek Cypriots that it wants to keep the island as its perpetual hostage and under its domination.

There is genuine concern among the Greek Cypriots about Turkey's objectives and designs against Cyprus. If any doubt existed about Turkish real intentions, that doubt was removed in 1974 by the unprovoked attack and military invasion of the Republic and the continued occupation by the Turkish armed forces of 37 per cent of its territory in violation of international law, the principles of the Charter, in particular Article 2, paragraph 4, and numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on Cyprus.

In the face of the Turkish invasion and continuing occupation of 37 per cent of the Cyprus territory, with all the tragic consequences, both for the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots alike, it is really astonishing that Turkey now presents itself as concerned about security and stability in the region. It is ludicrous to believe that small Cyprus can possibly pose a threat to a major military power, such as Turkey. It is also hypocritical not to mention the Lefconiko military airport in the occupied area of Cyprus, which is one of the biggest airports in the Middle East under the absolute control of the Turkish occupation army.

The landing of Greek aircraft at Paphos took place with the consent of the Government of Cyprus and was in the framework of a scheduled routine exercise. Moreover, our position on the S-300 defensive missiles and the Paphos airbase

have been explained in previous communications, in which the reasons for their purchase and construction have also been elaborated. As President Clerides underlines in his letter to you dated 18 June, the Cyprus Government is committed to reconsidering the issue of non-importation of new weapons systems to Cyprus, provided that progress is made on a schedule which includes a number of measures and steps leading towards the eventual goal of demilitarization. Turkey's supposed concern about regional stability will be judged by its response to President Clerides's genuine proposal, which safeguards the interests of all sides.

The letter of the Turkish Permanent Representative ends with an unmistakably clear and direct threat against Cyprus, that Turkey will "take the measures it deems appropriate".

I wish to strongly protest against this most blatant threat and urge you to remind the Government of Turkey of its obligations and responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Article 2, paragraph 4, and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus.

I should be grateful if you have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Sotirios ZACKHEOS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative